SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS

GO SOLAR GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO JOIN THE RANKS OF SOLAR OWNERS CHANGING OUR ENERGY SYSTEM

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WILL YOU BE NEXT?

Solar electricity is abundant, accessible, and increasingly affordable. As costs have fallen, more and more people are going solar. There are now more than 2 million solar homes in the U.S.

"It's a good way to save money, make the world a better place, and attain peace of mind when investing in a major upgrade to your home."

TERRY ALLARD
SOLAR HOMEOWNER
WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHY OUR MEMBERS GO SOLAR

- SAVE MONEY
- PROMOTE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE
- SOLAR CREATES JOBS
- TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY USE
- PRODUCE MY OWN POWER ON MY OWN PROPERTY
- IMPROVE THE STRENGTH + RELIABILITY OF OUR ENERGY SYSTEM
- REDUCE POLLUTION + PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

How Solar Works

1
Solar panels invert sunlight to direct current (DC) electricity

2
Inverter converts electricity from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC)

3
Your home consumes the electricity produced by your solar system

4
Solar array connects to the local grid, allowing you to receive electricity even when the solar panels aren't producing any

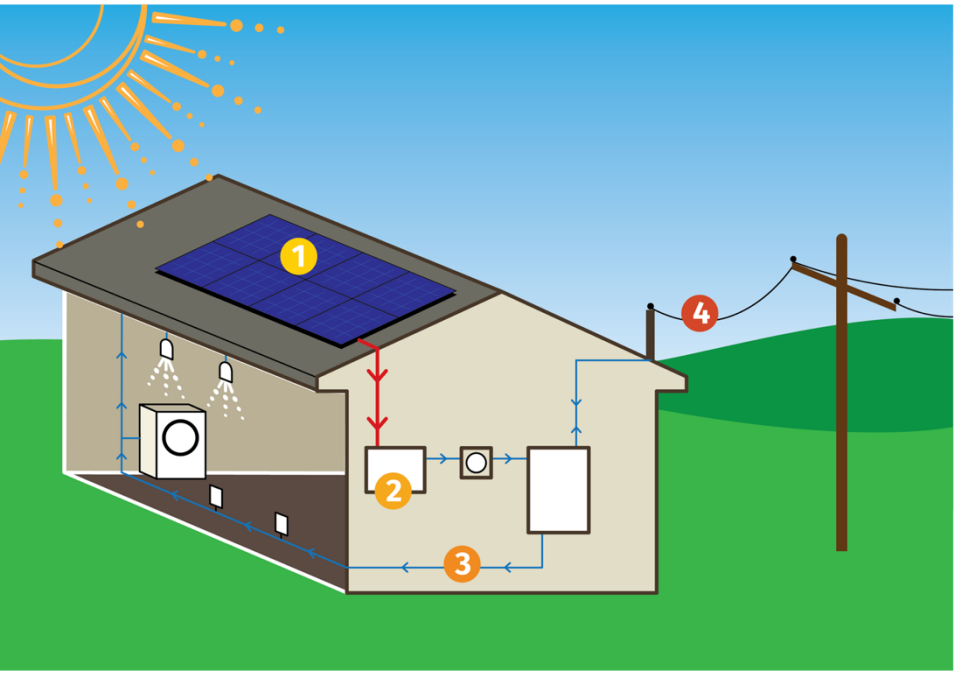
Quick Glossary

SOLAR ARRAY – Multiple solar panels wired together. Panels produce electricity when sunlight hits them. They can be mounted to the roof or on the ground.

INVERTER – Device that converts the electricity produced by your solar panels from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC), which can be used by your home.

kW – Kilowatt is a measurement of the size of your system. 1 kW is 1,000 W (watts). Most residential systems are 4 - 8 kW in size.

kWh: Kilowatt-hour is a measurement of the electricity produced by your system. The amount of kilowatt-hours produced by one kW of solar varies by location. Every kWh of electricity you produce from solar is one less kWh you have to purchase from your utility.



NET METERING – The policy that allows you to export any excess solar electricity back onto the electric grid and get compensated for that electricity.

Net metering ensures you receive fair credit for all the solar electricity you produce, whether it is consumed immediately in your home or exported to the grid.

Is Your Roof Good for Solar?

Solar panels work best when grouped together, so you'll want to install on a large, uninterrupted portion of roof. Your home needs to receive direct sunlight on its roof without shading. And southern exposure is the best, however east and west facing roofs also work for solar.

WHAT IF MY HOUSE ISN'T GOOD FOR SOLAR?

If solar won't work on your roof, consider mounting it on the ground if you have space on your property. Alternatively, you can enjoy the benefits of solar even if you can't put panels on your roof or land. With community solar, or "shared solar," you can subscribe to a solar array out in your community. Your portion of its electric output will show up as a credit on your electric bill, saving you money. Learn more at cs.solarunitedneighbors.org.

HOW MUCH DOES SOLAR COST?

Costs vary based on your system's type and size. Solar is priced by the watt. Nationally, costs for installation hover around $3.00/watt. The size of the average residential system falls between 4 kW (4,000W) and 8 kW (8,000W). Given the national installation cost of $3.00/watt, those systems will cost roughly $12,000 and $24,000, respectively. *(Note: this is before applying the 30% federal tax credit or state incentives)*

NATIONAL INSTALLATION AVERAGE OF **$3.00/W** BEFORE APPLYING THE **30%** FEDERAL TAX CREDIT

What financing options are available?

LOAN - Modern financing mechanisms have made solar more affordable and available to anyone interested. When going solar there are both unsecured and secured loans available. While you will incur interest payments over the loan's term, they can be the best way (short of buying with cash) to maximize your savings over the life of your solar system.

PPA* - Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) allow the installer to own and operate the solar panels on your roof, while you purchase the energy the panels produce each month at a rate that is typically lower than what you pay your utility. In turn, the installer takes advantage of the federal tax credit and any additional incentives. While PPAs typically provide savings from day one, solar customers won't generate nearly as much income over the life of the system.

LEASE* – Leases are similar to PPAs in that the installer will own, operate, and maintain the solar system. However, in a lease agreement the solar customer will pay a fixed monthly rate for the panels as opposed to a variable rate dependent on monthly solar production.

** PPAs and Leases are only available in certain states.*

HOW MUCH MONEY CAN I SAVE WITH SOLAR?

Solar saves you money by reducing your monthly electric bills. Thanks to net metering, every unit of solar electricity you produce is one less unit you must purchase from your electric utility. Over time, the cumulative total of your electric bill savings will pay off the upfront cost of your system. The payback period for a typical residential solar array is anywhere from 4 - 12 years, depending on market conditions and system performance. Solar is a long-term investment and panels are warranted to last 25-30 years. So, regardless of your exact payback period, your system will pay for itself.

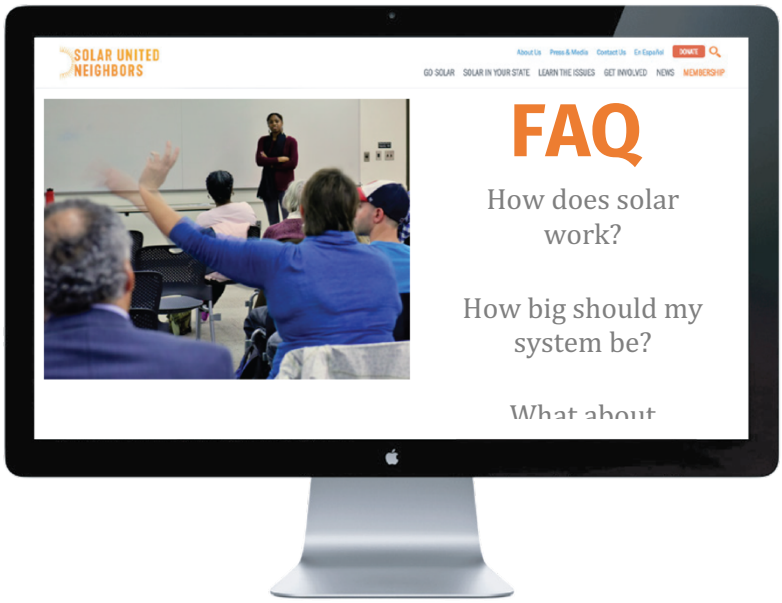
4-Year

To Earn Back The Cost of Your solar System

What kind of warranties come with my system?

How long will my system last?
How much maintenance does it require?

We’ve put together a detailed FAQ covering everything you need to know!



SOLARUNITEDNEIGHBORS.ORG/GO-SOLAR/FAQS

WHAT IS SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS (SUN)?

SUN is a national nonprofit dedicated to empowering people to go solar, join together, and fight for their energy rights.

Solar is great, but we know it can still be daunting to install it on your home or business.

We’re here to help you get started and support you along the way. We advocate for solar owners and supporters, like you.

Getting Solar Installed: What to Know Before, During, and After

Opportunities to go solar are stronger and more accessible than they've ever been. Here are few things to keep in mind when considering installing solar on your home or business:

SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS
HELPS PEOPLE NAVIGATE THE BUYING PROCESS, INCLUDING SOLICITING AND REVIEWING INSTALLERS' PROPOSALS.

NOT SURE IF THINGS ARE WORKING WELL?
SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS RUNS A SOLAR HELP DESK FOR YOU TO GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

Finding a solar installer is the first step in the process. Search online for solar installers in your area and ask friends and family for a referrals. To ensure you get the best deal, solicit proposals from at least 3 installers. Important things to consider when comparing proposals are: cost, equipment, and the installer's work history.

2-4 MONTHS

THE AVERAGE TIME IT TAKES TO GO SOLAR

Once you've selected a solar installer, they'll work with you to design a customized system for your home. When you sign a contract for that system, the installer will order equipment, apply for permits, and schedule the installation. **Actual installation only takes 1-2 days.** Once your system is installed, it will be inspected by your local government and the installer will request permission to interconnect it to your utility's electric grid. After that, it's ready to start producing electricity!

Once your system is up and running, there's not much ongoing maintenance. Most installers offer online monitoring, allowing you to track your solar electricity production in real time. Being able to see production estimates can help alert you to any potential problems with your system, which are then usually covered by labor or manufacturer warranties.

GOING SOLAR CHECKLIST

- [x] DONE Learn about solar. Get familiar with the technology, economics, and installation of solar
- [ ] Research solar installers in your area
- [ ] Solicit a custom solar proposal from at least three installers
- [ ] Compare proposals between installers
- [ ] Select the installer whose proposal best meets your needs, considering price, component materials, warranties, business history, etc.
- [ ] Sign a contract with the installer
- [ ] Get installed! This process entails permitting, installing, and connecting your system into the electric grid, all of which will be handled by your installer.

Want More Help Going Solar?

Solar United Neighbors is a nonprofit—not a solar company. We're installer-neutral, so we are first and foremost dedicated to consumer protection! We have two programs that make it easy to go solar:

GO SOLAR IN A GROUP

Our solar buying groups (called solar co-ops) empower groups of homeowners to save money by going solar together. We help you leverage the power of bulk negotiation to get a discount and ensure you get the right individual system for your home, a strong warranty, and quality installation.

GO SOLAR INDIVIDUALLY – WITH SUPPORT

Our Solar Help Desk provides you one-on-one support no matter where you are in the buying process. Learn the basics of solar equipment, get help reviewing your proposals from installers, or connect with us to get vendor-neutral help with your specific questions.

"The benefits of sharing information with experts or co-op members who are not trying to sell you the product itself are enormous."

Karen Smagala
Solar Homeowner in Virginia

SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Via Email:
info@solarunitedneighbors.org

Find out more online:
www.solarunitedneighbors.org